ISSUE 110
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2016

CONTENTS

46

5 Web sightings
Sailboat identifiers, sailboat sales, sailboat tips, and a family's sailboat adventure.

The view from here
BY JIM SHELL

7 Generation next
Sailing with the heirs to our pastime
BY KAREN LARSON

Mail buoy
BY ALAN LUCAS

8 Refit reflections, tank troubles and a Cutless question

Simple solutions
Spaces between deck beams beg to be filled
BY ALAN LUCAS

Quick and easy
65 Snare dock fittings from a distance
The humble boathook performs a clever rope trick
BY JIM SHELL

66 Boat locker boot camp
A car trunk organizer brings order to misfit stowages
BY CHRIS FARANETTA

67 Remote-controlled seacock
It opens and closes with a throttle lever
BY ANDY VINE

70 Product launchings
Your boat phones home and an iOS chart-viewer app gets better

71 Good old classifieds
Reflections

77 Spider wars
Eradication attempts wither to a ritual cleansing
BY DEAN RAFFAELLI

What's more

On the cover …
Lynn Watrous is all smiles at the helm of the 1969 Bristol 39 yawl Mirari sailing off Mystic, Connecticut. Lynn’s sailing partner is Mirari’s owner, Dan Stadtlander. Last year, Dan raced Mirari to victory in the Bermuda One-Two, winning first in class and fleet for the singlehanded outward leg from Newport, RI, and first in class for the doublehanded return leg. Mirari was the cover girl on the May 2014 Good Old Boat. (Cherie Calabrese captured them with her Nikon 7100.)

Learning experience
46 Deliverance from a doomed delivery
The best decision was to call for help
BY MARK MYAARD

What's more

www.audioseastories.com

September/October 2016

Good Old Boat
Safe sailing

Singlehanding the mainsail

Traveler controls belong in the hands of the helmsman

BY JOE CLOIDT

Rat’s axiom, that there is nothing — absolutely nothing — half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats, is especially true for those of us who own and sail good old boats. While the shiny gelcoat of a new boat is certainly eye-catching, the thought of 20 years of boat payments quickly dulls that gleam and a 20-year-old boat begins to look much more attractive. And if it needs some messing about with, that’s an excuse to go down to the marina, putter around on a “mature” boat, and spin yarns with the folks in the next slip.

When I bought my 1988 Pearson 31-2 many years ago, she had been neglected by a previous owner who no longer had the energy or inclination to maintain her. Desire was sound but, along with much TLC, was due for many of the upgrades and rebuilds older boats commonly need. I rolled up my sleeves and got to work. Once I had her back in Bristol fashion, I was able to start on some projects that would make it easier for me to sail her singlehanded. Near the top of the list was the mainsheet traveler.

Pearson built the 31-2 with the standard center-boom mainsheet setup with the traveler on the cabintop just forward of the companionway hatch. The traveler control lines ran through cam cleats at each end of the traveler, through slots in the windows of the dodger, and into the cockpit on either side. To adjust the traveler, I had to leave the helm, go forward to ease the windward control line, then cross to the other side of the cockpit to take up the slack on the leeward side. To make matters worse, the worn-out cam cleats made it difficult to release the lines from behind the dodger. This often led to more excitement than I care for when tacking in stronger winds, as

Joe sails singlehanded much of the time, and with his new mainsheet traveler control lines he can easily make adjustments to mainsail trim without leaving the wheel.
I was no longer at the wheel to keep the boat pointed in the right direction. There had to be a better way!

**Rumspiration**

I spent an afternoon aboard sipping Mount Gay rum and brainstorming ideas for a new traveler configuration. The solution was simple in principle but, as with most bright ideas, implementation was a different story. My idea was to remove the existing cam cleats, route the port-side control line across the cabintop to a turning block on the starboard side, and feed both lines aft through the dodger. I would secure them with new cam cleats mounted at the aft end of the cabintop where they would be within easy reach from the wheel. After considering the pros and cons of the new setup, I put my plan into action.

My local marine store had a disappointing selection of sailboat hardware but I was able to buy the line I needed: ½-inch Sta-Set double braid from New England Ropes. The new traveler lines would run side by side, so I selected red line for the port-side control line and green for starboard.

I went online to buy the block and cleats. Defender was having a sale on Harken hardware, and I selected a 29mm Carbo Air cheek block and a couple of Cam-Matic fairlead kits. In a few days, the Defender package was at my front door.

After removing the worn-out cam cleats and control lines, I rove the new control lines through the existing blocks at each end of the traveler and attached them to the traveler car. Splicing an eye in double-braid line has always reminded me of a snake eating itself and I have never mastered the technique. I tied the lines to the car with bowlines.

**A plan**

The old cam cleats had been mounted on stainless-steel plates attached to the traveler beneath the double cheek blocks. My plan was to mount a new turning block for the port-side line on the starboard plate, but when I placed the new block on the plate for fit, it was evident that it would interfere with leading the starboard line aft. The new block would have to be mounted inboard of the starboard block, but the plate wasn't wide enough for me to do that. I would have to fabricate another mounting plate that I could bolt on top of the stainless-steel plate as an extension.

I took some measurements back to my shop, where I cut a piece of ½-inch aluminum flat stock to make the second plate and drilled holes for mounting

---

The cam cleats for the traveler control lines were too far forward for Joe to easily release the lines, above. He removed the port-side cam cleat and led the line to the starboard side and through a cheek block, above right, so the port and starboard lines run side by side, at right.
Safe sailing | Singlehanding the mainsail

I cleaned up the new plate and sprayed it with outboard motor paint to protect it from the elements. Because the two plates are dissimilar metals and subject to potential galvanic corrosion, I stuck a layer of wide clear shipping tape to the bottom of the aluminum plate for additional isolation. Using #10 stainless-steel hardware and liberal amounts of anti-seize compound, I bolted the adapter plate to the stainless-steel plate at the outer hole where the old cam cleat had been located. I also added a tang at this point for attaching the Bimini cover strap.

When I led the port-side control line across the boat to the new cheek block and led both control lines aft, there was no interference between the two blocks and the lines.

A glitch

So far so good but, even when pulled taut, the port control line rubbed on the traveler car and the sea hood that covers the companionway hatch slide. I thought an easy solution would be to raise the new turning block so the line would clear the sea hood.

I worked a scrap piece of teak to make a shim that would fit under the block. This raised the line, but not enough to solve the problem. I knew I was on the right track and I had some ideas about possible solutions, but I decided to press on and come back to this later.

The next problem was the vertical slot in the dodger window. The dodger was originally designed so one line could pass through it, but now it had to allow two lines to pass through it side by side. As the clear vinyl wasn’t very clear anymore, it was an easy decision to have the local canvas shop replace the window and, at the same time, change the slot to accommodate the two lines.

To mark the location for the new slot, I pulled the lines to the aft end of the cabintop to where the new cam cleats would be located and boxed out the new slot on the old window with blue painter’s tape. While the dodger was at the canvas shop, I moved on to the next step of mounting the cam cleats on the cabintop.

A tight spot

Fortunately, Pearson provided removable panels in the cabin overhead to allow access to the bolts securing deck-mounted hardware. My initial plan was to mount the cam cleats as far aft on the cabintop as possible, but on removing the panel I saw the opening didn’t extend aft far enough to allow easy access. The narrow space between the deck and the headliner made for a tight spot for hardware and tools.

The backing plate for the cabintop winch and the curvature of the cabintop also limited the mounting options. As is often the case on a boat, a compromise was needed. I mounted the cam cleats farther forward than planned, but still within reach from the helm.

A small bulls-eye fairlead solved the problem of the port-side control line’s tendency to chafe on the sea hood.

When I led the port-side control line across the boat to the new cheek block and led both control lines aft, there was no interference between the two blocks and the lines.

A glitch

So far so good but, even when pulled taut, the port control line rubbed on the traveler car and the sea hood that covers the companionway hatch slide. I thought an easy solution would be to raise the new turning block so the line would clear the sea hood.

I worked a scrap piece of teak to make a shim that would fit under the block. This raised the line, but not enough to solve the problem. I knew I was on the right track and I had some ideas about possible solutions, but I decided to press on and come back to this later.

The next problem was the vertical slot in the dodger window. The dodger was originally designed so one line could pass through it, but now it had to allow two lines to pass through it side by side. As the clear vinyl wasn’t very clear anymore, it was an easy decision to have the local canvas shop replace the window and, at the same time, change the slot to accommodate the two lines.

To mark the location for the new slot, I pulled the lines to the aft end of the cabintop to where the new cam cleats would be located and boxed out the new slot on the old window with blue painter’s tape. While the dodger was at the canvas shop, I moved on to the next step of mounting the cam cleats on the cabintop.

A tight spot

Fortunately, Pearson provided removable panels in the cabin overhead to allow access to the bolts securing deck-mounted hardware. My initial plan was to mount the cam cleats as far aft on the cabintop as possible, but on removing the panel I saw the opening didn’t extend aft far enough to allow easy access. The narrow space between the deck and the headliner made for a tight spot for hardware and tools.

The backing plate for the cabintop winch and the curvature of the cabintop also limited the mounting options. As is often the case on a boat, a compromise was needed. I mounted the cam cleats farther forward than planned, but still within reach from the helm.

After marking the locations for the cleats on the cabintop, I checked from the inside to ensure the cleat hardware and backing plates would not interfere with other hardware or wiring. Satisfied, I drilled and countersunk the mounting holes in the coreless outer skin. I dry-mounted the cleats to make sure they fit and measured on the inside for backing plates. I made another trip to my shop to fabricate the plates from the 1⁄8-inch aluminum flat stock.

I installed the cleats using 3M Silicone Sealant on the stainless-steel hardware and the bases of the cleats. I’ve shied away from the more tenacious adhesive sealants because removing hardware bedded with these compounds usually involves much cussing and a pry bar.

With all the hardware mounted, it was time for a dockside test and — other than the line that still rubbed a bit — the new traveler setup operated perfectly. The canvas shop called later that day to say the dodger was done. Once I’d reinstalled that, I fed the control lines through the new slot in the window and into the cam cleats and tied stopper knots at the bitter ends. It was time for a test sail.

Resources

Harken deck hardware

3M sealants: www.defender.com

Sta-Set double-braid rope: www.newenglandropes.com

A small bulls-eye fairlead solved the problem of the port-side control line’s tendency to chafe on the sea hood.
The bulls-eye obstructs the center twist-lock fastener on the front of the dodger but, to Joe, that’s a fair compromise.

A success
I picked a day with light wind to get the feel of the new setup and to avoid any fire drills in case something went wrong. After several tacks, the ease with which I could adjust the traveler made it clear all my effort had been worthwhile. By draping the control lines back toward the helm on the starboard cockpit bench, I could keep one hand on the wheel and work both control lines while still keeping Desire on course. Another benefit was I no longer had to struggle to pop the lines up out of the cam cleats, which had often been a problem before.

At this point, other than the port traveler control line rubbing on the sea hood, I was very happy with the results and decided to put it to sea miles to work out any kinks. None appeared after a month of sailing, so it was time to pour some more rum and finally solve the matter of the rubbing line.

A bulls-eye
I’d already thought of using a taller wooden shim under the new cheek block, but it would have meant raising the block so high it would stick out like a sore thumb and the line led aft would rub on the block’s side plates. It would also rub on the new slot in the dodger window. This was not a solution. I poured another glass of rum and gave it more thought.

My second idea was to mount a block in the middle of the cabintop for the line to ride on, but there wasn’t much space between the front of the dodger and the traveler. Finding a block small enough and fashioning a bracket to hold it was a challenge. But I knew I was on the right track with this idea. Digging into the parts box for inspiration, I spotted a plastic bull’s-eye fairlead and knew this was the answer. Small and low-profile, it would be easy to mount on a bracket and, although not quite as friction-free as a block, should do the job. I took some measurements and, bending a piece of cardboard, made a prototype bracket. A twist-lock fastener for the dodger front window was in the spot where the new bracket would need to be located. I decided to mount the bracket under the twist lock using the existing screws.

I adjusted the angles on the prototype bracket to clear the traveler car and transferred the design to another piece of 1/8-inch aluminum flat stock. Then I installed the bracket under the twist-lock fastener and tweaked with the pliers to get the angles just right. I attached the fairlead to the bracket and ran the control line through it. With the new bracket, the line now cleared the seahood and the traveler car. I removed the bracket for cleaning and painting, then reinstalled it using silicone sealant on the mounting screws.

I finally considered the project to be done and I was very happy with the results. But since we don’t live in a perfect world, one last gotcha showed up. When I closed the dodger front window, the new bracket interfered with the leading edge of the window, making it almost impossible to get the window panel eyelet over that middle twist-lock. Since I was now out of rum and good ideas, I removed the twist-lock and allowed the window edge to simply lie flat. It’s not ideal, but it works.

My modified traveler-control setup has been in place for well over a year and has worked well. This was a low-cost weekend project and it has made my singlehanded sailing much easier. I spent a little time messing about on my boat to get it done, but I can’t think of anything else half so much worth doing.

Joe Cloidt is a sailor, writer, filmmaker, tinkerer, and electrical engineer by trade. He has been messing about with sailboats for more than 30 years and has worked on every part of them, from the bottom of the keel to the top of the mast and all parts in between. His current boat is Desire, a 1988 Pearson 31-2 that he sails on the Indian River Lagoon on the east central coast of Florida. Joe also enjoys charters in far off locations and the occasional cruise to the Bahamas when between jobs. Although mostly a cruising sailor, Joe crewed on a J/30 at the local yacht club for the Friday night Rhum Races.

Joe can release and ease, or trim and lock, either control line without leaving the helm.

www.audioseastories.com

September/October 2016

Good Old Boat  37